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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2912
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4320
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0081
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002255

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SUBJECT: NEPAL SUPPORTS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON
LEBANON; CONSIDERING TROOPS FOR UNIFIL

REF: SECSTATE 132517

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador explained the U.S. position on UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1701 on Lebanon to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Oli on August 17. A senior Nepali Foreign Ministry (MFA) official told us August 18 that Nepal completely supports the resolution. According to the Defense Advisor to Prime Minister Koirala, the PM has not yet decided if Nepal will contribute peacekeepers to an expanded UN force in Lebanon. The government is considering the idea and may make a decision in a few days after the PM returns to Kathmandu. End Summary.

Ambassador Briefs Foreign Minister

¶2. (C) On August 17, the Ambassador explained U.S. thinking on UNSC Resolution 1701 to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister K.P. Oli. He noted that the Government of France had the lead in generating forces for an expanded UNIFIL peacekeeping operation on Lebanon's southern border with Israel. Given Nepal's long and proud history of involvement in UN peacekeeping generally and in Lebanon in particular, the Ambassador was confident a Nepali contingent would be welcome. The Ambassador also took the opportunity to give Oli a copy of Secretary Rice's August 17 Washington Post op-ed on Lebanon.

Nepali Foreign Ministry Completely Supportive

¶3. (C) During a conversation with Emboff on August 18, MFA UN, International Organization and International Law Section Joint Secretary Dinesh Bhattarai expressed Nepal's complete support for the UN resolution on Lebanon. Bhattarai said that the MFA had informed the Nepalese Mission in New York to support the resolution in whatever way possible. The Joint Secretary stated that the resolution is a "good thing, so

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long as it works" and that Lebanon should be "free from bombs and killing." He said that all the parties should follow the resolution. He had told us previously that "non-state parties cannot have arms."

No Decision Yet on Peacekeepers

14. (C) Koirala's Defense Advisor, Ramesh Jung Thapa, told the Deputy Chief of Mission August 18 that Koirala had not yet decided whether Nepal will contribute forces to an expanded UN mission in Lebanon. The Prime Minister would be returning to Kathmandu in two or three days from his hometown of Biratnagar and might make a decision then. The DCM noted that the expanded UN force could face a very hostile environment (the Ambassador had made the same point with Oli one day earlier), but Nepali troops had the experience and hardiness required. Thapa added that, if the Nepali Government did decide to deploy troops, they would require additional training and would therefore not be available for immediate deployment.

Comment

15. (C) The BBC World Service jumped the gun today and reported that the Government of Nepal had already made a decision to deploy peacekeepers. Our GON interlocutors were surprised at this news. That said, it would not be surprising if the Nepalis do end up offering to assist with this mission. They know Lebanon and have troops who have extensive peacekeeping experience. They also have an army that has only recently thrown off the king's yoke and wants to prove its bona fides to its new democratic masters. We hear that Nepali Army officers are actively urging the civilian leadership to approve the idea. A Nepali UN mission in Lebanon would be a win-win from our perspective.

MORIARTY